The Gifts We Don't Ask For

by Reda

Summary: During the seven years after Cell, Goku meets his parents in the Other World, after some strings are pulled, of course.

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**Pairing: **Bardock x Gine

**Words: **3,484

**Summary: **Goku meets his parents in the Other World, after some strings are pulled, of course.

**A/N: **I needed to write something of this; I've seen fanart with Goku meeting his parents, but I still needed to write this. Whether or not it makes sense. Whether or not it would actually happen. I _needed_ this.

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King Yemma shook his head. "No, I won't do it."

"Oh, come on, Yemma," the old man said. "It'd only be a temporary thing."

"It's unheard of," Yemma said, slamming his book on his desk. "And improper. Not to mention difficult considering -"

Baba _humphed_ quite loudly on her crystal ball, gaining the attention of both men in the room. She'd had just about enough of this constant back-and-forth from these two. Son Gohan was making an elaborate request â€" and for the benefit of someone else â€" but by this point Baba was just about as curious as the old

Earthling.

Floating up to Yemma's desk, she stared him in the eye and added her own two cents. "Oh, stop complaining and grant him this one thing."

"What's the point of this anyway?" Yemma shot back. "It's not as if Son Goku cares about meeting his parents."

The old grandfather figure shrugged. "I care. I'm curious. Don't you wonder what his parents could be like? Or how they'll react? How _he'll_ react?"

"No," Yemma snorted. "They're Saiyans. I can assure you they don't care either."

Baba narrowed her eyes. "You're just saying that so you don't have to go through the hard work of finding their bodies or deal with all that paperwork."

While King Yemma growled, Son Gohan laughed. "Oh, is that all? Well, if you do this for me, I'll owe you something."

Yemma shook his head. "There's nothing you could -"

"I work for Annin."

At the contemplative silence, Baba _humphed_ again. _Men._

~!~

She came awake suddenly, a loud gasp filling the air. Her fingers had feeling first, a strange tingling sensation running all the way up her arms and traveling the length of her body. Slowly traveling. She shivered and whimpered as the sensation spread across her body, opening her eyes and blinking several times to focus on her surroundings.

A pounding hit her head and she groaned as memories surfaced and flooded her mind. Warnings from Bardock. Some worry about the future, fear over Lord Frieza. And then there was the thought of Raditz, who had been pushed into working with Prince Vegeta. Oh and Kakarot. Having to say goodbye to her newest, youngest son, watching his space pod disappearâ€¦

Tears hit her eyes, the emotions numbing her heart but the pain bursting through anyway. Everything felt so strange but the aching heartache, the pain of saying goodbye...she could feel _that_ so strongly.

"Shh," a deep, calm voice whispered to her as calloused hands held her face and a forehead pressed into hers. "I know it's rough at first, Gine, but you can do this. We don't have much time."

She opened her eyes to meet the warm gaze hidden in the hard, battle worn face of her love, her mate. Their tails met and a spark of their connection filled her, comforted her, distracted her from the pain of the all consuming heartache. Nothing else made sense. Her memories were a mess. Her body felt different, strange, like it was only a shadow of her true form.

But he was here, so she could smile and swallow the tears.
"Bardock."

He nodded, pulling away, and she saw the room for the first time. An empty white space with white-washed walls, as if a storage room awaiting someone to fill it. Rather small, too, and a door on the far side closing them off from whatever lay beyond. Her first thought chilled her to the bone. It felt like a prison.

"Bardock," she whispered, realizing she was sitting down and curled up against one of the walls, still wearing the same Saiyan armor she'd been in during her last memories. "Bardock, where are we?"

He shrugged, standing next to her, leaning his hand against the wall as his eyes shifted and glared at the door. "It's...Gine, look up."

At his instruction, she followed his hand with her eyes and felt her mouth fall open at what she saw hovering in the air above his head. "Is that a halo? Are you dead? Oh gosh, am I dead, too?"

Her own hands went up to above her head, finding and touching the warmth of a thin circular disc. Dead. They were both dead. But that meantâ€¦

"Bardock, if we're dead, then -"

He nodded, the cross-shaped scar pulling against his face as he frowned. "I'll explain what I know. We don't have much time. They're bringing Kakarot to -"

"Kakarot's dead, too?" Gine jumped to her feet at the news. "But we spent all that effort to get him off the planet! Was it all for nothing?"

To her surprise, Bardock simply sighed in response; he didn't seem upset at all; then again, he never had worn his emotions on his sleeves the way she did. "Settle down, Gine. Just let me explain."

Closing her mouth, Gine did as he said, though she stayed on her feet in apprehensive anticipation. Her tail flicked behind her in reaction to every new piece of information, and by the time the door to their little white-washed prison opened, she was waiting with a quickly beating heart and bated breath. What would her son be like? What would he look like? After living without his parents, how would he react to seeing them for the first time?

How would _she_ react?

~!~

Goku wasn't really sure what he was supposed to feel.

On the one hand, his chest still felt funny from meeting up with Grandpa Gohan. Even if he'd been dead in the Other World for a few years, he hadn't thought to find his grandpa among all the souls. Instead, Grandpa Gohan had come to him, pulling him away from training on the Grand Kai's planet for some special visit. The

emotions he felt then, seeing his grandpa after all these years, those he knew how to explain; he knew what they were and why he felt them.

He'd taken the opportunity to apologize for crushing his grandfather as a giant Oozaru. The Saiyan giant monkey form that he hadn't known about, that no one had ever shared with him until he fought against Vegeta and realized for himself what the full-moon-monster actually was, had crushed his grandfather when Goku was still an unknowing child. Gohan had laughed and shrugged it off as if it wasn't a big deal, as if there was nothing to apologize for, and then Goku had really started to lose control of himself because his grandfather was still just as nice and forgiving as he remembered.

Even now, looking down at the old man as he gestured across the white-washed room, Goku felt that little ache in his chest. He lifted his hand and rubbed at the area around his heart, too, as if he could calm the strange little fluttering pain. Family always had this strange effect on him, and of course now that he thought about family he had to bite back the reminder that he'd left his wife and son in order to protect them. He was dead. For good now. There would be no other family reunion until his wife and son died, hopefully of natural causes.

Or so he thought.

"Kakarot!"

At his Saiyan name, Goku turned his head from his grandfather just in time to gape at a small woman grabbing his hands. He blinked as he stared at the person he had never seen in his life (or death, until now). Dark hair, wild and spiked from the bangs to where it poked just shy of her shoulders. Armor that he would recognize from any member of Frieza's army, which made him confused as to why she was grabbing his hands, why she was smiling, why her Saiyan tail was free and flicking in the air behind her, why her eyes were big and bright and somehow imprinted on his memory as part of a face he felt safe around.

"You really do look just like your father."

"Uh -" He tried to say something, his thoughts whirling with questions as he stared at this strange Saiyan woman, wondering why someone he'd never met before could make him feel soâ€¦

"Oh! What happened to your tail?" She said, glancing around behind him as if it had fallen off somewhere, before she smiled up at him, squeezing his hands. "Don't worry, it'll grow back eventually. Maybe. I'm not sure how it works if you're dead."

"Heh."

He swallowed a lump in the back of his throat, and tried to say more but nothing came to him. Words were failing. His thoughts were a whirling mess as he tried to pin down what feeling he was supposed to accept right now. Too many emotions crowding around inside, so he was stunned as he stared down at her eyes and tried desperately to remember where he had seen her before. Why was she so familiar? He hadn't met a female Saiyan before; he was pretty sure he would remember something like that. And it wasn't so much that _she_ was

familiar but _her eyes_ and _her voice_.

Especially her voice. Light in the air. Soft on the ears. Humming with some special _something_ that brought a whole new ache to his chest. Like from a time long past, an echo of a memory he couldn't place, a _sense_ that she had talked to him for long lengths of time. Nothing about the encounter was normal, but _this_ set him off balance and he couldn't figure out why.

"Gine," a man's voice from the far side of the room. "I told you, he's not going to recognize you. He probably doesn't even care."

"You shush! You're just as excited and you know it!" The female Saiyan snapped over her shoulder and then turned back to smile up at Goku as if she hadn't done anything out of the ordinary. "Your father doesn't understand. There's a special connection between mothers and their children. You recognize me, don't you, Kakarot? Even if you don't know why."

Goku felt his heart skip a beat. _Mothers and children. Your father._

He swerved his head to stare over at his grandfather, who had stepped back when the Saiyan came forward. Grandpa Gohan smiled wide and nodded, his hands behind his back, watching patiently. Goku felt his eyes widen, gasping as he swerved right back to staring at the female Saiyan. At his...Oh...That explained it, then. That explained the strange familiarity.

But Saiyans were supposed to be ruthless. His own brother had been evil. Raditz had kidnapped his son, insisting he kill the humans of Earth, and he would have killed him if not for...but...but this was..._she_ was...so different...Bright and happy, tears shining in her eyes even as she held onto his hands and refused to drop her grip. Her tail reminded him of his own from childhood, the way it bounced around as she grinned up at him none the wiser. She reminded him of...ofâ€¦

"M-mom?"

His vision blurred as she nodded, and then forced an embrace. His heart ached as she held him, and his hands trembled as he tried to figure out what he was supposed to do in return, suddenly feeling like a shy little child. She rubbed his back and murmured something soothing in a language he didn't understand, some words that felt more like a lullaby, a rhythmic undertone that gave him flashes of feelings he didn't realize he had, memories too far back to call memories, just a sense of _knowing_ she had said this, or sung it, before. He didn't know what to do, so he let the tension ease as he relaxed in _his mother's_ embrace and tried not to cry over the bond, the longing he didn't realize he had been holding onto all these years.

Another voice floated through the air, closer than it had been earlier. "Son."

Goku blinked as his mother pulled away. He turned his blurred vision and shook his head to clear it so he could focus on the other presence in the room. The male Saiyan walked up behind his mother,

setting a hand on her shoulder, before offering a steady gaze to him. No smile. Just one deep, dark gaze staring back at him, as if searching for something between them.

The resemblance was uncanny, and he was reminded of Gine's earlier comment about how he looked so much like his father. Goku swallowed another lump in his throat. Father. Son. He'd only ever been on one side of that relationship. Oh, sure, he had a father figure in Grandpa Gohan, but it wasn't the same. His grandfather had only ever called him by name or "my boy" never "son." Suddenly, he could know a bit of what his own son felt when Goku called him such.

"Did you ever fight Frieza?"

"Bardock!" his mother snapped, stomping her foot and glaring up at his father in disbelief. "Of all the things you could ask, you're going to -"

To Goku's surprise, his father smiled down at her and even ruffled her hair playfully as she fumed. "Relax. He's my son, too, you know; he'll appreciate the conversation topic. Besides, it's something that's been haunting me ever since I woke up here."

Breaking into a little smile of his own, Goku scratched at his cheek as he watched the interaction between his parents and shrugged when his father so correctly assumed he'd appreciate the topic. "Yeah, I fought Frieza."

"Is that what killed you?" Gine asked, jumping into the conversation anyway. "I don't remember much of my death except of the moments before of knowing Bardock was about to go attempt to gather a rebellion against him...and then there was this bright light in the sky and everything..."

Goku blinked, eyes wide as he turned to his father. "You â€" you tried to fight Frieza, too? But weren't you guys supposed to be working for him?"

Bardock growled, crossing his arms. "Something I'd rather wish we hadn't done, but yeah, I tried to fight him. Ended up being alone because no one wanted to follow me. It didn't end well."

"Yeah, no kidding," Goku said, and then winced at the shocked look on their faces. "I mean, uh, it's kind of obvious it didn't work out for you. Since you're both dead and all."

He laughed to cover up the awkward silence and stares from his parents. Talking to his parents about Frieza and the Saiyan race was something he never thought he'd ever do. He knew Vegeta had tried to get him to care about their dying race at the time, but Goku fought Frieza for his own reasons. He wasn't really in it then for the Saiyan race; he never had been. Still, somehow knowing that his father had stood against Frieza's rule at the end...he wanted to breathe easier, knowing his family wasn't all evil like he'd been led to believe. He could be proud to be related to them, glad to meet them even in death, though he knew this moment wasn't going to last. They wouldn't get to keep their bodies; this was something special Grandpa Gohan had arranged just for him; some temporary gift he hadn't asked for.

"Anyway," Goku said. "Yeah, I fought Frieza. I beat him, too. It was tough, though, and my best friend died in the process. But because of that I became a Super Saiyan and then it was -"

"A Super Saiyan?"

He laughed at the shock on their faces. "Yeah. Wanna see? I can do it at will now."

When they nodded in sync with each other, Goku grinned. He liked seeing their interaction. He could tell they actually liked each other, and that made him happy, too, for some reason, since Vegeta had always given the impression that Saiyans weren't supposed to care for someone like that. When he stepped back and jumped into his Super Saiyan transformation, he continued to grin as he watched their tails reach for each other, watched their eyes bulge out in shock. And then he dropped it, rubbing the back of his neck.

"It's -" Gine whispered. "It's real."

Goku chuckled. "Yeah, my son can actually go the next step beyond."

"Your son?" When he nodded, she grabbed his hand and pulled him down to the floor with her, pushing him to sit as she crossed her legs and leaned forward. "Tell me everything."

"Everything?"

She nodded. "Of course. Start from the beginning as far back as you remember. I want to know everything about you."

"Uh, well," he scratched at his cheek. "Don't get offended by this, but for starters...everyone on Earth calls me Goku..."

Time didn't really pass in Other World the same way it did in the real world, but he knew he spent a while going through his entire life story. He tried to keep it as in order as possible to not be confusing, but sometimes he would remember an event he hadn't explained that actually caused something in the future. At some point, Bardock sat down on the floor to join them, and they bounced stories back and forth. Asking questions, filling in all the things they would have been able to share had they actually had the chance to grow as a family.

He told them of his own family still down on Earth. Of his wife and son. Of his friends, too. Of his adventures with the dragonballs and everything in between.

When he finished his stories, his mother stood up and walked over to Grandpa Gohan to thank him for being there and raising him as much as he did. Goku smiled as he watched their interaction. It was nice seeing how friendly and kind his mother was; he wanted to go tell Vegeta how wrong he had been to assume that all Saiyans were one way. Though he could definitely get the Saiyan vibe from his father. Except for when he caught Bardock looking at Gine. They had a special relationship, and it made Goku feel warm deep in his chest to know he wasn't strange for actually loving someone.

A hand touched his head, and Goku turned to meet his father's steady

gaze, which softened ever so slightly as Bardock murmured. "I'm proud of you, son."

His heart stilled for a moment as he stared back into those dark eyes, the world around buzzing down to nothing. This entire encounter had been full of emotions and longings coming to the surface for the first time, things he had wished for on a deeper level that he'd never needed to think about before. Meeting his parents alone had brought those uncertain but thankful feelings to the surface. Hugging his mother...Hearing her voice and finding that ache to be stronger than he would have ever imagined.

And then there was Bardock, his father, who had been so distant the whole time. Distant but present. Showing a clear interest in his battle achievements as Gine showed interest in his family. He hadn't been sure what to make of seeing his father. His mother had touched on a deeper sense locked far beneath everything else, but his father had been like meeting any other person in his life.

Until now.

Goku never expected anything for the things he did in life. He fought because it was fun. He protected his friends and family. He lived each day as it came to him, never paying attention to the passage of time. He had grown and discovered feelings along the way. From love of his wife, to pride in his son. He'd even been sure to tell Gohan how proud he was of his achievements against Cell before he sacrificed himself to save them, knowing such a statement would be important for Gohan to keep close as he grew up without him.

And now that he was on the receiving end of those words, he realized just how much they actually meant. Slowly, he let a small smile grace his lips as he discovered a new feeling deep in his heart, as his mother came over to give him one last hug before their bodies disappeared into the emptiness, as their temporary gift ran out of time. After all this time, saying goodbye to his parents left him feeling empty inside, longing for more time, knowing he couldn't have it, and once again left to sit in silence as he tried to remind himself that his family on Earth would one day arrive to meet him and he wouldn't be alone forever.

He didn't realize he was crying until he instinctively reached up to wipe the wetness from his cheeks.

End
file.